

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCA-01 SY-04 OPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02

SCSE-00 PPTE-00 COME-00 /046 W

----- 021289

R 071145Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7540

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 10593

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, ELTN, PK

SUBJ: TOURIST RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL TO HUNZA

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 9471 (B) STATE 227134

1. EMBOFFS CALLED ON TOURISM MINISTRY DEPUTY SECRETARY MEERZA ON NOVEMBER 6 AND RECEIVED CONFIRMATION THAT HUNZA IS CLOSED TO FOREIGNERS FOR AN INDETERMINATE PERIOD. HE SAID THAT ALL SECTIONS OF THE KARAKORUM HIGHWAY (BEING BUILT BY THE PRI FROM THAKOT AT NORTHERN EDGE OF NWFP THROUGH GILGIT AND HUNZA TO THE CHINESE BORDER) WILL BE CLOSED TO TOURISM.

OFFICER WAS UNFAMILIAR WITH THE OCTOBER 8 ARTICLE BY TED MORELLO IN THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR BUT SAID THE ARTICLE WAS WRONG IN INDICATING THE AREA WAS STILL OPEN.

2. WHEN EMBOFFS ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY POSSIBILITY OF OPENING UP HUNZA WHEN THE HUNZA-GILGIT PORTION OF THE HIGHWAY WAS COMPLETED, OR WHETHER COMMERCIAL HELICOPTER TOUR GROUPS BETWEEN GILGIT AND HUNZA, MR. MEERZA SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO INQUIRE AND LET THE EMBASSY KNOW.

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EM COMMENT. AS REPORTED BY REFTTEL A AND ASSORTED EMBASSY
MEMCONS, THE HUNZA AREA HAS BEEN CLOSED SINCE ABOUT AUGUST
13, FOR POSSIBLY AS LONG AS THREE YEARS. REGARDING THE
MORELLO ARTICLE, USIS RECALLS THAT MORELLO WAS IN THIS
AREA ABOUT AUGUST, DURING PART OF WHICH MONTH HUNZA WAS
OPEN. WE SUSPECT HE WROTE HIS OCTOBER 8 ARTICLE ON THE
BASIS OF A VISIT HE PAID TO HUNZA BEFORE ITS CLOSURE.
BYROADE

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